

Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A method of communicating between two business entities, each of the business entities utilizing a different communication protocol, wherein a business conversation is established between the entities, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a business-to-business (B2B) protocol exchange for facilitating communications between the business entities, the B2B protocol exchange being operatively connected to the business entities;

10 receiving, at the B2B protocol exchange, a message from one of the business entities in a first communication protocol;

translating the received message in the first communication protocol into a translated message in a second protocol used by another of the business entities; and

sending the translated message to the other business entity.

15 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of translating the received message is based on information included in one or more prior messages received by the B2B protocol exchange during the business conversation.

20 3. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:
storing information relating to the business conversation, the information being used for translating a subsequent message.

25 4. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
generating a conversation identifier associated with the business conversation; and
inserting the conversation identifier into the translated message.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of translating the received message further comprises the steps of:

determining a protocol of a target business entity; and
translating the received message into the target business entity protocol.

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6. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of sending the translated message to the other business entity further comprises the steps of:

identifying a postback universal resource locator (URL) associated with a target business entity; and

10 sending the translated message to the postback URL.

7. The method of claim 6, further comprising the step of:

storing the postback URL associated with the target business entity.

15 8. In a business-to-business (B2B) framework including a plurality of business entities, a protocol exchange operatively connected to the business entities, the protocol exchange comprising:

at least one processor operative to: (i) receive a message from one of the business entities in a first communication protocol; (ii) translate the received message in the first communication protocol into a translated message in a second protocol used by another of the business entities; and (iii) send the translated message to the other business entity; and

20 memory coupled to the at least one processor, which stores information relating to at least one of the business entities and a business conversation established between two or more business entities in the B2B framework.

25 9. The protocol exchange of claim 8, wherein the operation of translating the

received message is based on information included in one or more prior messages received by the protocol exchange during the business conversation.

10. The protocol exchange of claim 8, wherein the at least one processor is
5 further operative to: (iv) store information relating to the business conversation, the information being used for translating a subsequent message.

11. The protocol exchange of claim 8, wherein the at least one processor is further operative to: (iv) generate a conversation identifier associated with the business
10 conversation; and (v) insert the conversation identifier into the translated message.

12. The protocol exchange of claim 8, wherein the at least one processor is further operative to: (iv) determine a protocol of a target business entity; and (v) translate the received message into the target business entity protocol.

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13. The protocol exchange of claim 8, wherein the at least one processor is further operative to: (iv) identify a postback universal resource locator (URL) associated with a target business entity; and (v) send the translated message to the postback URL.

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14. The protocol exchange of claim 13, wherein the at least one processor is further operative to: (vi) store the postback URL associated with the target business entity.

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15. A business-to-business (B2B) system comprising:
a plurality of business entities; and
at least one protocol exchange operatively connected to the business entities, the at least one protocol exchange receiving one or more messages from a first

business entity communicating in a first protocol and translating the received messages into at least a second protocol corresponding to one or more other business entities.

16. The system of claim 15, wherein the business entities are operatively
5 connected to the protocol exchange via one or more networks.

17. The system of claim 15, wherein the protocol exchange translates the received messages using information included in one or more prior messages received by the protocol exchange during a business conversation between two or more of the business entities.

18. An article of manufacture for communicating between two business entities, each of the business entities utilizing a different communication protocol, wherein a business conversation is established between the entities, the article of manufacture comprising a machine readable medium containing one or more programs which when executed implement the steps of:

receiving a message from at least one of the business entities in a first communication protocol;

translating the received message in the first communication protocol into a
20 translated message in a second protocol used by another of the business entities; and
sending the translated message to the other business entity.

19. The article of claim 18, wherein the step of translating the received
message is based on information included in one or more prior messages received during
25 the business conversation.

20. The article of claim 18, further comprising the step of:

storing information relating to the business conversation, the information being used for translating a subsequent message.

21. The article of claim 18, further comprising the steps of:
 - 5 generating a conversation identifier associated with the business conversation; and
 - inserting the conversation identifier into the translated message.
22. The article of claim 18, wherein the step of translating the received message further comprises the steps of:
 - 10 determining a protocol of a target business entity; and
 - translating the received message into the target business entity protocol.
23. The article of claim 18, wherein the step of sending the translated message to the other business entity further comprises the steps of:
 - 15 identifying a postback universal resource locator (URL) associated with a target business entity; and
 - sending the translated message to the postback URL.
24. The article of claim 23, further comprising the step of:
 - 20 storing the postback URL associated with the target business entity.